DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Aviation Administration

14 CFR Part 39

[Docket No. FAA–2026–13819; Project Identifier MCAI–2025–01531–R]

RIN 2120–AA64

Airworthiness Directives; Airbus Helicopters Deutschland GmbH (AHD) Helicopters

AGENCY: Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), DOT.

ACTION: Notice of proposed rulemaking (NPRM).

SUMMARY: The FAA proposes to adopt a new airworthiness directive (AD) for certain Airbus Helicopters Deutschland GmbH (AHD) Model EC135P1, EC135P2, EC135P2+, EC135P3, EC135T1, EC135T2, EC135T2+, EC135T3 and EC635T2+ helicopters. This proposed AD was prompted by a determination that the manufacturer's service material does not provide complete instructions for the inspections after a hard landing. This proposed AD would require a one-time inspection of the tail rotor control system and, depending on the inspection results, corrective actions. This proposed AD would also require revision of the existing aircraft maintenance manual (MM) or instructions for continued airworthiness (ICA) and the existing approved maintenance or inspection program, as applicable. The FAA is proposing this AD to address the unsafe condition on these products.

DATES: The FAA must receive comments on this NPRM by January 4, 2027.

ADDRESSES: You may send comments, using the procedures found in 14 CFR 11.43 and 11.45, by any of the following methods:

- *Federal eRulemaking Portal:* Go to *regulations.gov*. Follow the instructions for submitting comments.
- *Fax:* (202) 493–2251.
- *Mail:* U.S. Department of Transportation, Docket Operations, M–30, West Building Ground Floor, Room W12–140, 1200 New Jersey Avenue SE, Washington, DC 20590.
- *Hand Delivery:* Deliver to Mail address above between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m., Monday through Friday, except Federal holidays.

AD Docket: You may examine the AD docket at *regulations.gov* under Docket No. FAA–2026–13819; or in person at Docket Operations between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m., Monday through Friday, except Federal holidays. The AD docket contains this NPRM, the mandatory continuing airworthiness information (MCAI), any comments received, and other information. The street address for Docket Operations is listed above.

Material Incorporated by Reference:

- For European Union Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) material identified in this proposed AD, contact EASA, Konrad-Adenauer-Ufer 3, 50668 Cologne, Germany; phone: +49 221 8999 000; email: *ADs@easa.europa.eu;* website: *easa.europa.eu.* You may find the EASA material on the EASA website at *ad.easa.europa.eu.*
- You may view this material at the FAA, Airworthiness Products Section, Operational Safety Branch, 10101 Hillwood Parkway, Fort Worth, TX 76177. For information on the availability of this material at the FAA, call (817) 222–5110.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Shailesh Malla, Aviation Safety Engineer, FAA, 1600 Stewart Avenue, Suite 410 Westbury, NY 11590; phone: (817) 222–5584; email: *shailesh.malla@faa.gov.*

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Comments Invited

The FAA invites you to send any written relevant data, views, or arguments about this proposal. Send your comments using a method listed under **ADDRESSES**. Include ''Docket No. FAA–2026–13819; Project Identifier MCAI–2025–01531–R'' at the beginning of your comments. The most helpful comments reference a specific portion of the proposal, explain the reason for any recommended change, and include supporting data. The FAA will consider all comments received by the closing date and may amend this proposal because of those comments.

Except for Confidential Business Information (CBI) as described in the following paragraph, and other information as described in 14 CFR 11.35, the FAA will post all comments received, without change, to *regulations.gov*, including any personal information you provide. The agency will also post a report summarizing each substantive verbal contact received about this NPRM.

Confidential Business Information

CBI is commercial or financial information that is both customarily and actually treated as private by its owner. Under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) (5 U.S.C. 552), CBI is exempt from public disclosure. If your comments responsive to this NPRM contain commercial or financial information that is customarily treated as private, that you actually treat as private, and that is relevant or responsive to this NPRM, it is important that you clearly designate the submitted comments as CBI. Please mark each page of your submission containing CBI as ''PROPIN.'' The FAA will treat such marked submissions as confidential under the FOIA, and they will not be placed in the public docket of this NPRM. Submissions containing CBI should be sent to Shailesh Malla, Aviation Safety Engineer, FAA, 1600 Stewart Avenue, Suite 410 Westbury, NY 11590. Any commentary that the FAA receives which is not specifically designated as CBI will be placed in the public docket for this rulemaking.

Background

EASA, which is the Technical Agent for the Member States of the European Union, has issued EASA AD 2020–0102, dated May 6, 2020 (EASA AD 2020–0102) (also referred to as the MCAI), to correct an unsafe condition on certain AHD Model EC135 P1, EC135 P2, EC135 P2+, EC135 P3, EC135 T1, EC135 T2, EC135 T2+, EC135 T3, EC635 P2+, EC635 P3, EC635 T1, EC635 T2+ and EC635 T3 helicopters. The MCAI states that the master service manual (MSM) for Model EC135 and EC635 does not provide complete instructions for the inspections after a hard landing. This condition, if not corrected, could lead to missed identification of tail rotor control damage, which could result in component or system failure and reduced control of the helicopter.

You may examine the MCAI in the AD docket at *regulations.gov* under Docket No. FAA–2026–13819.

Material Incorporated by Reference Under 1 CFR Part 51

The FAA reviewed EASA AD 2020–0102, which specifies procedures for inspecting the tail rotor control system and, if a discrepancy is found, accomplishing the applicable corrective actions. EASA AD 2020–0102 also specifies that accomplishing the inspection of the tail rotor control system in accordance with the instructions of the aircraft MM is an alternative method for the inspection in accordance with the service material. Additionally, EASA AD 2020–0102 specifies that revising the Aircraft Maintenance Program (AMP) of a helicopter by incorporating the qualified instructions as defined in EASA AD 2020–0102 is a terminating action for recording compliance.

The FAA also reviewed Aircraft Maintenance Manual 05–51–00, 6–3, Conditional Inspections after Special Operational Incidents—Inspection,

Dated March 28, 2025, which specifies conditional inspections after a hard landing.

This material is reasonably available because the interested parties have access to it through their normal course of business or by the means identified in the **ADDRESSES** section.

FAA's Determination

These products have been approved by the civil aviation authority (CAA) of another country and are approved for operation in the United States. Pursuant to the FAA's bilateral agreement with this State of Design Authority, that authority has notified the FAA of the unsafe condition described in the MCAI referenced above. The FAA is issuing this NPRM after determining that the unsafe condition described previously is likely to exist or develop on other products of the same type design.

Proposed AD Requirements in This NPRM

This proposed AD would require accomplishing the actions specified in EASA AD 2020–0102, described previously, as incorporated by reference, except for any differences identified as exceptions in the regulatory text of this AD. See ''Differences Between this Proposed AD and the MCAI'' for a discussion of the general differences included in this proposed AD.

Differences Between This Proposed AD and the MCAI

The MCAI applies to AHD Model EC635 P2+, EC635 P3, EC635 T1, and EC635 T3 helicopters, whereas this proposed AD would not because these model helicopters do not have an FAA type certificate. The MCAI requires accomplishing corrective actions in accordance with the qualified instructions as defined in the MCAI, whereas this proposed AD would require those corrective actions be accomplished in accordance with a method approved by the Manager, International Validation Branch, FAA; or EASA; or AHD Design Organization Approval (DOA).

Additionally, the MCAI requires for certain helicopters, inspecting the helicopter after each hard landing, whereas this proposed AD would require all applicable helicopters to perform these inspections within 12 months after the effective date of this proposed AD. Furthermore, the MCAI specifies that revising the AMP by incorporating the qualified instructions as defined in the MCAI is a terminating action for recording compliance, whereas this proposed AD would require revising the existing aircraft MM or ICA and the existing approved maintenance or inspection program, as applicable, by incorporating certain qualified instructions.

Explanation of Required Compliance Information

In the FAA's ongoing efforts to improve the efficiency of the AD process, the FAA developed a process to use some CAA ADs as the primary source of information for compliance with requirements for corresponding FAA ADs. The FAA has been coordinating this process with manufacturers and CAAs. As a result, the FAA proposes to incorporate EASA AD 2020–0102 by reference in the FAA final rule. This proposed AD would, therefore, require compliance with EASA AD 2020–0102 in its entirety through that incorporation, except for any differences identified as exceptions in the regulatory text of this proposed AD. Using common terms that are the same as the heading of a particular section in EASA AD 2020–0102 does not mean that operators need comply only with that section. For example, where the AD requirement refers to ''all required actions and compliance times,'' compliance with this AD requirement is not limited to the section titled ''Required Action(s) and Compliance Time(s)'' in EASA AD 2020–0102. Material required by EASA AD 2020–0102 for compliance will be available at *regulations.gov* under Docket No. FAA–2026–13819 after the FAA final rule is published.

Costs of Compliance

The FAA estimates that this AD, if adopted as proposed, would affect 289 helicopters of U.S. registry.

The FAA estimates the following costs to comply with this proposed AD:

ESTIMATED COSTS

Action	Labor cost	Parts cost	Cost per product	Cost on U.S. operators
Inspect the tail rotor control system	4 work-hours × $85 per hour = $340	$0	$340	$98,260
Revise maintenance program	1 work-hour × $85 per hour = $85	0	85	24,565

The conditional inspections, repairs, or replacements needed as a result of inspecting the tail rotor control system could vary significantly from helicopter to helicopter. The FAA has no way of determining the costs to accomplish these actions or the number of helicopters that may require repair.

Authority for This Rulemaking

Title 49 of the United States Code specifies the FAA's authority to issue rules on aviation safety. Subtitle I, section 106, describes the authority of the FAA Administrator. Subtitle VII: Aviation Programs, describes in more detail the scope of the Agency's authority.

The FAA is issuing this rulemaking under the authority described in Subtitle VII, Part A, Subpart III, Section 44701: General requirements. Under that section, Congress charges the FAA with promoting safe flight of civil aircraft in air commerce by prescribing regulations for practices, methods, and procedures the Administrator finds necessary for safety in air commerce. This regulation is within the scope of that authority because it addresses an unsafe condition that is likely to exist or develop on products identified in this rulemaking action.

Regulatory Findings

The FAA determined that this proposed AD would not have federalism implications under Executive Order 13132. This proposed AD would not have a substantial direct effect on the States, on the relationship between the national government and the States, or on the distribution of power and responsibilities among the various levels of government.

For the reasons discussed above, I certify this proposed regulation:

(1) Is not a ''significant regulatory action'' under Executive Order 12866,

(2) Would not affect intrastate aviation in Alaska, and

(3) Would not have a significant economic impact, positive or negative, on a substantial number of small entities under the criteria of the Regulatory Flexibility Act.

List of Subjects in 14 CFR Part 39

Air transportation, Aircraft, Aviation safety, Incorporation by reference, Safety.

The Proposed Amendment

Accordingly, under the authority delegated to me by the Administrator, the FAA proposes to amend 14 CFR part 39 as follows:

PART 39—AIRWORTHINESS DIRECTIVES

■ 1. The authority citation for part 39 continues to read as follows:

Authority: 49 U.S.C. 106(g), 40113, 44701.

§ 39.13 [Amended]

■ 2. The FAA amends § 39.13 by adding the following new airworthiness directive:

Airbus Helicopters Deutschland GmbH (AHD): Docket No. FAA–2026–13819; Project Identifier MCAI–2025–01531–R.

(a) Comments Due Date

The FAA must receive comments on this airworthiness directive (AD) by January 4, 2027.

(b) Affected ADs

None.

(c) Applicability

This AD applies to Airbus Helicopters Deutschland GmbH (AHD) Model EC135P1, EC135P2, EC135P2+, EC135P3, EC135T1, EC135T2, EC135T2+, EC135T3 and EC635T2+ helicopters, certificated in any category, all serial numbers up to and including 1276.

Note 1 to paragraph (c): Helicopters with an EC135P3H designation are Model EC135P3 helicopters, and helicopters with an EC135T3H designation are Model EC135T3 helicopters.

(d) Subject

Joint Aircraft System Component (JASC) Code 6720, Tail rotor control system.

(e) Unsafe Condition

This AD was prompted by a determination that the manufacturer's service material does not provide complete instructions for the inspections after a hard landing. The FAA is issuing this AD to address and correct incomplete inspection instructions. The unsafe condition, if not addressed, could result in missed identification of tail rotor control damage, which could result in component or system failure and reduced control of the helicopter.

(f) Compliance

Comply with this AD within the compliance times specified, unless already done.

(g) Requirements

Except as specified in paragraphs (h) and (i) of this AD: Comply with all required actions and compliance times specified in, and in accordance with, European Union Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) AD 2020–0102, dated May 6, 2020 (EASA AD 2020–0102).

(h) Exceptions to EASA AD 2020–0102

(1) Where EASA AD 2020–0102 refers to its effective date, this AD requires using the effective date of this AD.

(2) Where paragraph (1) of EASA AD 2020–0102 applies only to Group 1 helicopters, this AD requires paragraph (1) of EASA AD 2020–0102 to apply to Group 1 and Group 2 helicopters.

(3) This AD does not adopt paragraph (2) of EASA AD 2020–0102.

(4) Where paragraph (5) of EASA AD 2020–0102 specifies ''Revising the AMP of a helicopter by incorporating the qualified instructions, as defined in this AD, ensures continued accomplishment of those instructions for that helicopter. Consequently, after that AMP revision, it is not necessary that accomplishment of any action as required by this AD is recorded for AD compliance demonstration on a continued basis.'', this AD requires replacing this text with ''For Group 1 and Group 2 helicopters, within 30 days after the effective date of this AD, revise the existing maintenance manual or instructions for continued airworthiness and the existing approved maintenance or inspection program, as applicable, by incorporating the Aircraft Maintenance Manual 05–51–00, 6–3, Conditional Inspections after Special Operational Incidents—Inspection, Dated March 28, 2025''.

(5) Where the material referenced in EASA AD 2020–0102 specifies to contact the manufacturer prior to doing the special instructions after a hard landing, this AD requires corrective actions in accordance with a method approved by the Manager, International Validation Branch, FAA; or EASA; or Airbus Helicopters Deutschland GmbH Design Organization Approval (DOA). If approved by the DOA, the approval must include the DOA-authorized signature.

(6) Where the material referenced in EASA AD 2020–0102 specifies to perform an ''Ease of Movement check'', this AD requires replacing that text with ''Ease of movement inspection''.

(7) This AD does not adopt the ''Remarks'' section of EASA AD 2020–0102.

(i) No Reporting Requirement

Although the material referenced in EASA AD 2020–0102 specifies to submit certain information to the manufacturer, this AD does not require that action.

(j) Special Flight Permits

Special flight permits, as described in 14 CFR 21.197 and 21.199, are not allowed.

(k) Alternative Methods of Compliance (AMOCs)

(1) The Manager, International Validation Branch, FAA, has the authority to approve AMOCs for this AD, if requested using the procedures found in 14 CFR 39.19. In accordance with 14 CFR 39.19, send your request to your principal inspector or local Flight Standards District Office, as appropriate. If sending information directly to the manager of the International Validation Branch, send it to the attention of the person identified in paragraph (l) of this AD and email to: *AMOC@faa.gov.*

(2) Before using any approved AMOC, notify your appropriate principal inspector, or lacking a principal inspector, the manager of the local flight standards district office/certificate holding district office.

(l) Additional Information

For more information about this AD, contact Shailesh Malla, Aviation Safety Engineer, FAA, 1600 Stewart Avenue, Suite 410 Westbury, NY 11590; phone: (817) 222–5584; email: *shailesh.malla@faa.gov.*

(m) Material Incorporated by Reference

(1) The Director of the Federal Register approved the incorporation by reference of the material listed in this paragraph under 5 U.S.C. 552(a) and 1 CFR part 51.

(2) You must use this material as applicable to do the actions required by this AD, unless the AD specifies otherwise.

(i) European Union Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) AD 2020–0102 dated May 6, 2020.

(ii) Aircraft Maintenance Manual 05–51–00, 6–3, Conditional Inspections after Special Operational Incidents—Inspection, Dated March 28, 2025.

(3) For EASA material identified in this AD, contact EASA, Konrad-Adenauer-Ufer 3, 50668 Cologne, Germany; phone: +49 221 8999 000; email: *ADs@easa.europa.eu;* website: *easa.europa.eu.* You may find the EASA material on the EASA website at *ad.easa.europa.eu.*

(4) For AHD material identified in this AD, contact Airbus Helicopters, 2701 North Forum Drive, Grand Prairie, TX 75052; phone: (972) 641–0000 or (800) 232–0323; fax: (972) 641–3775; website: *airbus.com/en/products-services/helicopters/hcare-services/airbusworld.*

(5) You may view this material at the FAA, Airworthiness Products Section, Operational Safety Branch, 10101 Hillwood Parkway, Fort Worth, TX 76177. For information on the availability of this material at the FAA, call (817) 222–5110.

(6) You may view this material at the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA). For information on the availability of this material at NARA, visit *www.archives.gov/federal-register/cfr/ibr-locations* or email *fr.inspection@nara.gov.*

Issued on November 17, 2026.

Steven W. Thompson,

Acting Deputy Director, Compliance & Airworthiness Division, Aircraft Certification Service.

[FR Doc. 2026–23576 Filed 11–18–26; 8:45 am]

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